



SB 261 AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES  
Wednesday January 27, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to testify publicly during these challenging times. We appreciate your nimbleness to make these hearings available virtually.

My name is Brandon Dufour, I am the Founder and CEO at The Next Street. We are a driving school that operates in 37 Connecticut towns. We teach more than 20,000 new drivers per year in Connecticut, representing more than 65% of the new driver marketplace in Connecticut. Covid-19 has presented our industry and specifically our company with an ongoing list of challenges. We are proud of how we've handled these challenges and especially proud of our team that continues to make getting a license in Connecticut a priority. Each day, nearly 100 licensed driving instructors are teaching new teen drivers in person, in our cars, with masks on, windows rolled down and ample disinfectant on hand. It isn't perfect or even preferred, but it's what we must do to get driver's licenses into the hands of new drivers.

Due to the pandemic, the DMV has temporarily allowed our classroom sessions to be taught virtually. This has been a silver lining for our industry. The DMV has included language in SB 261 to make Virtual Classroom Learning a permanent solution, and I'm here to speak in support of that proposal. We are seeing an increased number of students opting into the 30-hour classroom program because of the convenient access to the virtual classes. We have lost no education quality in the virtual medium and we hear only compliments and praise from our staff and customers.

We do recommend some clarity for driving schools. I'd like to suggest a few items to assure that Virtual Learning remains high quality and focused on the local roads and driver education needs in Connecticut:

1. Classes must be taught by a live instructor that is teaching from within the State of Connecticut. Pre-recorded lectures or online learning modules would drastically reduce the quality of education.
2. Currently, students must take a quiz at the end of the classroom session to assess their understanding of the material. We believe this quiz should be law with clear and outstanding penalties for driving schools that do not offer quizzes or do not require passing grades before completing a student.
3. Current regulations require classroom locations to be licensed by the DMV. Language should be clarified as to where virtual classes can be taught from. Most of our instructors are currently broadcasting from their homes.
4. Driving schools should be required to teach both classroom training and practical driving lessons. There is a major correlation between the theory taught in class and the practical skills behind the wheel. Schools teaching only classroom sessions are a disservice to the student.



I respectfully submit this testimony and am available to answer any questions or brainstorm other needed solutions. Together, traffic safety leaders in this State, including members of this committee, have made major strides in protecting our new teen drivers. Let's continue to make Connecticut's roadways among the safest in the country for new teen drivers.

Brandon Dufour  
Founder/CEO  
The Next Street  
Middlebury, CT  
(203) 906-6635  
[Brandon.dufour@thenextstreet.com](mailto:Brandon.dufour@thenextstreet.com)